

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-21, 24, and 26-30 were pending in the application. The non-final Office Action dated November 7, 2006 rejects claims 1, 2, 4-15, 17-21, and 24, objects to claims 3 and 16, and allows claims 26-30. This paper amends claims 1, 8, 14, 21, 24, and 26, and cancels claims 3 and 16. The amendment to claim 26 is for purposes of properly describing the terms associated with the MIB acronym, and not for overcoming any cited art.

The Office Action indicates that claims 3 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 3 and independent claim 14 to include the subject matter of claim 16, which, in effect, rewrites claims 3 and 16 in independent form in accordance with the Office Action. Applicants submit that this amendment places independent claims 1 and 14 into condition for allowance.

In addition, Applicants have amended independent claims 8, 21, and 24 to recite language similar to the language added to allowable independent claims 1 and 14, and therefore submit that these claims are also allowable.

Each pending dependent claim depends directly or indirectly from one of the patentable independent claims, and incorporates all of its respective limitations and, therefore, is patentably distinguishable for at least those reasons provided in connection with the independent claims. Applicants submit that the dependent claims are likewise allowable.

### **Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102**

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4-15, 17-21, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Blackman (U.S. Patent No. 6,219,673).

Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is moot in view of the above-described amendments to the independent claims 1, 8, 14, 21, and 24.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the amendments and arguments made herein, Applicants submit that the application is in condition for allowance and requests early favorable action by the Examiner.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conversation with the Applicants' representative would expedite allowance of this application, the Examiner is cordially invited to call the undersigned at (508) 303-0932.

Respectfully submitted,

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